

COPD: Energy Conservation

When you have COPD, it is very common to run out of energy during the day.

That's why doing every day activities can become challenging.

"Dear, why didn't you answer the door?" – Francois

"Because I'm having a bad day breathing." – Leta, Patient

"Anything I can do?" – Francois

You can lessen the feelings of helplessness and exhaustion by finding ways to conserve your energy during the day.

Conserving energy can help you feel better and do more.

"So we do things that we call energy conservation. And that includes trying to kind of preparing out your day so that you don't get frustrated and get in a rush and then have more shortness of breath." – Dr. Lansing

Talk with your healthcare provider about ways you can get the most out of every day.

For example, you won't use as much lung power if you sit while showering and if you wrap yourself in a soft robe to dry off.

Use handrails and other medical equipment that can help you get dressed and moving.

Use pursed lip breathing as you do things to conserve your breath. And sit when brushing your teeth or shaving.

In fact sitting down is a great way to conserve energy. Sit while folding laundry or preparing dinner.

You can save a lot of energy by keeping things in easy to reach places saving the energy used to bend down and reach up.

Another energy saving idea is to leave time between activities throughout the day.

Take a few minutes and make a schedule of everything that you have planned to do in a day.

Don't schedule too much for a short period of time. Rushing through activities or trying to do too much will force you to use your energy faster.

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If you become tired during any activity, stop and rest.

Making many trips up and down stairs during the day uses lots of energy. To conserve energy, try to make one trip instead of many.

Take a rest while going up the stairs if you need it.

And just going up the steps can be overwhelming for some...

"I could feel the changes in my body when I had to go up the steps. I could feel the anxiety of going up the steps. When I would do laundry before, by time I got up this set, I didn't have any energy to go in there and change a load." – Marilyn, Patient

Some people might qualify or be able to purchase a chair lift to help.

"In the three weeks since I've had the chair lift, my emotions, my joy. It may sound crazy to other people. But the joy of knowing that, oh, I can go up steps any time I want to, I can come down steps any time I want to. I did my laundry on Saturday. I did all of my laundry. And when I was finished, I sat on my bed and I cried." – Marilyn, Patient

And remember ask for help from friends and family. They can do chores or other activities that might be too much for you to do.

Plus you can spend time with them and enjoy their company.

Also these days you might be able to reach out for other help....

"So I can order all of my meats, my frozen vegetables and everything, so I do not have to go to the grocery store. I order my detergent, my bleach, my everything, comes to my front door." – Marilyn, Patient

Somedays you just might not have the energy you need. Go easy on these days, rest and recover so the next day can be better.

And make sure to get a good night's sleep.

Conserving your energy can help you do more of the things that you want to do.

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To conserve your energy plan your activities ahead of time. Use energy saving approaches to everyday tasks like sitting instead of standing.

Make sure you leave time to rest between activities during the day. Ask others to help too.

Remember energy conservation will help you feel better and do more.